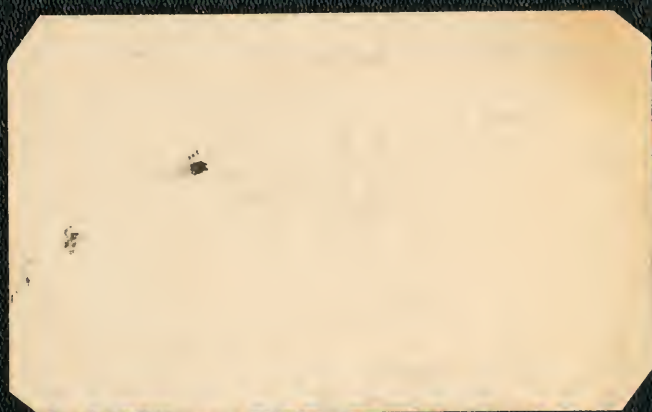


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Class E 376

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Nathaniel - Alexander

## TO THE ELECTORS

*Of Franklin, Patrick, Henry, and Bedford.*

### FELLOW-CITIZENS:

To give a detailed view of each question that comes before the national legislature, will not be expected; I doubt whether it would be possible from the magnitude and variety of the subjects that are daily arising to do so within the usual limits of a letter; but having enjoyed uniform good health, and thereby enabled to vote on every measure that has been acted on since I was a member of Congress, I can state my vote on each subject, and the reasons which governed me, if required, so to do. Influenced by these considerations, this letter will be principally devoted to political and statistical views of the United States. Several of my constituents have requested of me this course, and I am sensible of its propriety. A war has prevailed for some time between Russia and the Ottoman Porte; but from present appearances, its flames will not reach any of the other powers of Europe; on the contrary, we have reason to believe the other great powers will continue aloof therefrom, until an opportunity shall arise to enable them to act the part of mediators. As yet our commerce has sustained no loss from this war, nor is it likely that it will, the theatre of hostile operations being principally on the Black sea and in the interior of the country; and we may well anticipate, that neither France or Great Britain would look with indifference on military operations in the Archipelago, whereby their commerce, as well as ours, might and would be subjected to great and certain loss. This war has already had a considerable influence on the price of our bread stuffs; and it is believed by me, that should it continue another year, that influence will be greatly increased, not that our bread stuffs will be sent to the combatants—for the war prevails in the most fertile regions of Europe—the regions from which many of the northern and other markets of Europe have heretofore been supplied; but on the contrary, our bread stuffs will be sent to those places which were wont heretofore to be supplied from the borders of the Black sea. I may be mistaken, but it seems to me, that should peace be speedily made between Russia and the Ottoman Porte, we may still calculate on a good price for our surplus wheat the ensuing year, for we know that the crops of the last year have partially failed in a large portion of continental Europe.

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Our controversy, of such long standing with Great Britain, if our northeastern boundary, it is true, is not yet settled; but we believe it shortly will. In conformity with the provisions of the treaty of Ghent, and the convention of 1824, the King of the Netherlands has been chosen both by Great Britain and the United States as an arbitrator to decide between us. The president says in his communication, made at the opening of the present session, "The proposal to him" (the king of the Netherlands,) "to accept the designation for the performance of this friendly office, will be made at an early day, and the United States, relying upon the justice of their cause, will cheerfully commit the arbitrament of it to a Prince equally distinguished for the independence of his spirit, his indefatigable assiduity to the duties of his station, and his inflexible personal probity."

With France our commerce has increased; and being peculiarly beneficial to the section of country I have the honour in part to represent, I hope will be found mutually advantageous to both nations. The claims of our citizens for spoiliations committed by the Brazillians during the late war between them and the people of Buenos Ayres, have in part been paid by the government of Brazil, and the balance are in a train for final settlement; and I will add, that the claims of our citizens on Denmark for spoiliations on our commerce that occurred during the wars that grew out of the French revolution, have in part been paid, and satisfaction is promised to all; and no doubt is entertained by me that this will be speedily done. Recent advices from France "encourage the expectation that the appeal to the justice of the French Government will ere long receive a favorable consideration," and that our claims on them for depredations on our trade, at an era when the rights of neutral nations were wholly overlooked, will be recognized and settled.

Exclusive of money received under the convention with Great Britain of the 13th Nov. 1826, there was in the treasury on the 1st Jan. 1828, \$5,861,972 83 cts. The receipts in the treasury up to 30th Sept. 1828, were £18,633,580 27 cts. and it was estimated that the succeeding quarter would make up the sum of \$24,694,863 67 cts. It is perhaps unnecessary to state, that the duties accruing one year are collected generally the next, the importers giving bonds for the duty payable at the expiration of a given period from the execution of the bond. What the amount of revenue may be the next year, no one I think can determine with accuracy; but it is hoped it will be sufficient to support the government, &c. and enable us to apply, as heretofore, since 1819, the sum of ten millions to the discharge of the national debt. The exports of the United States of articles raised by ourselves in our own territory, and by our own labour in 1827, amounted in value to \$58,321,694. Thus from the sea, of fish oil, spermaceti, &c. \$1,575,332. From the forest, skins, furs, ginseng, staves, timber, boards, ashes, tar, pitch, turpentine and naval stores, bark and dye stuffs, \$3,343,070. From agriculture, wheat,



tobacco and cotton principally, pork, beef, tallow, butter, live stock, sugar, hops, wax, flaxseed, horses, mules, &c. &c. &c. \$46,965,143; manufactures \$6,486,846; miscellaneous \$560,490; making a grand total as above of \$58,921,691, of goods previously brought into the United States; from foreign countries there was re-exported in 1827, to the amount of \$23,403,136, making the total amount of exports for that year \$82,324,827, and exceeding the imports \$2,849,759. Our exports are to every quarter of the globe. To give a better idea of the extent of our trade, and the almost boundless industry and enterprise of our citizens, I subjoin a statement of the American commerce with China—a statement which I am assured by commercial men approximates to accuracy. It will be borne in mind that a voyage to and from this distant region of the globe, requires at least one year and ten months, though it is sometimes performed in a much shorter space of time.

It appears that the exports from the United States to China, during the year ending 30th July, 1827, amounted to \$4,243,617, of which only \$1,841,168 were in specie, and 400,000 bills of exchange on Europe; beaver, otter, fox, and other skins, 252,000; cotton and woollen goods, 895,000; lead, iron and copper, 283,000; quicksilver, 197,000; ginseng, 66,000. During the same period the exports from China to the United States in 21 vessels, amounted to \$4,439,715; of this sum \$1,963,000 were for teas, 92,000 for cassia, chinaware and matting; 1,556,000 for silk goods.

Thus we find that where man is, there is our flag—and I will add, it is every where respected—and well it may be. It is the record of our national existence, independence and glory. The American tonnage engaged in the foreign, coasting, and fishing trade, may be fairly estimated at 1,700,000 tons.

The American Navy consists of a number of vessels; of which there are seven 74's, or ships of the line already afloat; seven 44's, or frigates of the first class afloat; four of the second class, including the Fulton steam ship; twelve sloops of war; seven schooners, and other vessels. The 74's afloat are the Independence, Franklin, Washington, Columbus, Ohio, North Carolina, and Delaware—the frigates afloat are the Constitution, United States, Guerriere, Java, Petomac, Brandywine, and Hudson, Congress, Constellation, Macedonian, and Fulton—the sloops of war are the John Adams, Cyane, Hornet, Erie, Ontario, Peacock, Boston, Lexington, Vincennes, Warren, Natchez, and Falmouth and others—the schooners are, among others, the Dolphin, Grampus, Porpoise, Shark, Fox, Alert and Sea Gull. At the present time, nineteen of the above vessels are in ordinary, and twenty-one in commission. In addition, five ships of the line, six frigates, and four sloops of war, are now building, and in a state of forwardness. The Constitution, United States and Constellation, frigates, were launched in 1797, and are the

oldest vessels in the navy; the Congress and John Adams in 1793; the Hornet in 1803, from which time till 1813, an interval of ten years, no public vessel was built. The Macedonian frigate, and Alert, sloop of war, captured in that year, have ever since remained in the navy.

Every means by shelter and otherwise is resorted to, to preserve our vessels of war from decay. Of the ships at sea, a part are in the Mediterranean—a part on the coast of Brazil—a part on the coast of the West Indies, and the remaining squadron in the Pacific. The object of those squadrons is the protection of our commerce.

The vessels stated to be building, can be finished and put afloat in ninety or one hundred days, should necessity require. Thus you see, we have a highly respectable naval force; a force that in all our wars have done their duty; a force that fought itself into favor.

The population of the United States in 1790, was 3,921,426; in 1800, it was 5,319,762; in 1810, it amounted to 7,220,903; in 1820, the population was 9,637,999; and at this time it is estimated at 12,500,000. This population is spread unequally over a territory of 1,009,144 square miles. Thus in Massachusetts they have upwards of seventy to the square mile, in Rhode Island sixty-three, in Connecticut sixty-one, in Virginia seventeen, in the District of Columbia three hundred and ninety-one; and in some states not more than  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , &c. Fortunately such is the character of the soils and climates of our country, that it is capable of sustaining a population equal to that of half continental Europe; and if it be true, and it is believed to be so, that our present increase is near half a million annually, but a few years will roll round before, with the blessing of God, our numbers will equal that of the most numerous nation that now or ever did exist.

*Let us cling to our happy and glorious union, have entangling alliances with none, do equal justice to all nations, frown indignantly on him who would cut our union asunder, if any such there be, and should the hour of adversity and trial come, we shall have nothing to fear, for that country is safe from all force whose shores are defended by the imprescriptible principles of justice and patriotism.*

The regular force is 6,186, divided into 11 regiments, four of artillery, seven of infantry, &c. This force is distributed along the seaboard, and on the inland frontier, to preserve the defences or fortifications (erected with so much labour and expense) from dilapidation—and which fortifications, in the event of future war, will so eminently relieve the militia, and contribute to the general safety of the country. By partial returns made at various times, from 1823 to 1827, the militia of the United States appears to be 1,205,411, but this, I hesitate not to pronounce manifestly erroneous. If we adopt the opinions of the most approved writers on such subjects, we say that the persons subject to militia duty in the United States, after making all necessary deductions from legal exemption, amounts to at least one million and a half. I believe the

number is, if any thing, still greater; for uniformly it will be found, that more than a sixth of all communities are persons capable of bearing arms.

The number of invalid pensioners on the 14th October, 1828, was 3,786. The number of non-commissioned officers and privates, pensioners under the act of 18th March, 1818, was 11,919; officers under same act of 18th March, 1818, was 369. Of the revolutionary and invalid pensioners, 516 were taken from the list by death during the year ending 4th Sept. 1828. Returns were not made from Virginia and five other states, nor were they made from the territories—which, when made, will swell the list of deaths considerably. Thus we see how rapidly the remnants of a gallant and glorious band of patriots and soldiers are passing off the stage to that country from whose bourn no traveller has ere yet returned—leaving us nought but the memory of their sufferings, their victories, their glory, and their bright example. The national debt on the first of January next, will be \$58,362,135 78 cts. and if, as has been the case since 1819, ten millions should be regularly and annually applied to its payment, it will be soon discharged; an event to be most devoutly desired. For a long time the interest was so onerous that little could be applied to the principal. It is now reduced, so that every payment makes a material diminution and admonishes us of its final discharge.

An exploring ship is about to sail to the seas that encircle the southern pole. Persons eminently skilled in botany, astronomy, and mineralogy, will be of the expedition; and we may calculate on the event of its fortunate return, that a new theatre will be pointed out to the genius and enterprise of our citizens, and the boundaries of astronomical and natural geography greatly enlarged. The Peacock ship of war, commanded by Capt. Jones, has been designated by the Secretary of the Navy to this service.

The following statement shows the increase and present condition of the post office department:

<i>Years.</i>	<i>Post Offices.</i>	<i>Revenue.</i>	<i>Miles of Post Roads.</i>
In 1792	195	\$67,444	5,642
1797	554	213,998	16,180
1802	1,114	327,045	25,315
1807	1,848	478,763	33,755
1812	2,610	649,208	39,378
1817	3,459	1,002,973	52,099
1823 e'g. July 1st	4,498	1,114,344	82,763
1828	7,661	1,598,134	114,536

The above exhibit shows an augmentation of annual revenue within five years, ending 1st July, 1828, of \$483,790, a sum exceeding by \$18,654 a similar increase for eleven years preceding 1823, and falling short only \$165,418, of being equal to the total revenue of the Department in 1812. Within the same time there has been established 3,153 addition-



al post offices; being a greater number than was in operation in the United States in the year 1815.

Some pains have been taken to ascertain the exact number of persons employed by the Department, including Postmasters, Assistant Postmasters, Clerk, Contractors, and persons engaged in transporting the mail, and although only partial returns have been received, it is believed the total number is about twenty-six thousand, nine hundred and fifty-six. There are about seventeen thousand five hundred and eighty-four horses employed, and two thousand eight hundred and seventy-nine carriages, including two hundred and forty-three sulkies and wagons.

It is known that the people at large take a deep interest in this department of the government, and well they may. Besides the information, literary and political, that it diffuses over the country, there are few, if any, to whom it does not at one time or another furnish the means of epistolary conversation with relations and friends, and it affords me pleasure to say, as far as I am capable of judging, it is managed by the post-master-general with great ability.

We enjoy peace with all nations, and have in prospect a long continuance of that blessing. What citizen who beholds our increase in population and resources for defence, who contemplates our star-spangled banner waving on every sea—who recognizes in every object that meets his eye or solemnizes his thoughts evidences of an independence—founded on a sure and broad basis, who can perfectly appreciate the thousand ties besides a common language, ancestry and glory, which will forever save us from those political dis-ruptures that might endanger our union. Who does not feel his bosom glow with gratitude to the ruler of the world that he is an American citizen? none, no not one.

Having exhibited the foregoing political and statistical views, I will proceed to other matters.

So far this may be said to be a business Congress, for in truth a great deal has been done. Yet a detail would be dull and uninteresting. I have endeavoured, by distributing in various neighbourhoods in my District public documents and new-papers, to give information as to the business transacted, and the votes I have given; and if I have succeeded according to my wishes, any thing further would be superfluous.

Some attempts were made to modify the existing tariff, but they all failed. It is true that the revenue this year has not suffered by the tariff of 1828; but it ought to be remembered that in anticipation of the passage of that tariff an unexampled mass of goods were poured into the country, and that the importations since have been much less, can be proven to demonstration; and should the diminished importations continue, as some believe will be case, it may lead to a modification of the tariff. Nay, I believe that those who are the most favourably inclined to the law of 1828, would part with it sooner than resort to the lightest direct tax. The necessary result of the law was to flood the country

with goods before its onerous burdens began to operate, and of course to augment the revenue. This was clearly foreseen. One month previous to the law going into operation, the importations into New York were nearly as great as ever had been in the like space of time. My opinions on the subject of a tariff are well known, and it is unnecessary to repeat them. I will only add, that without regard to the *quarter from whence it may come*, I shall feel bound to vote for every proposition that seeks to bring it back to such amount as is sufficient to support the government, and prepare for the defence of the country, and pay off the public debts in a reasonable time. Every duty that is laid is a tax on him who consumes the article on which it is imposed; and some of the duties are felt sensibly by my constituents. Fortunately, we may in a great measure avert from us many of the evils flowing from the protecting system. We should raise our horses and hogs, increase the number of our sheep, cultivate more cotton and flax, and as far as in our power, manufacture our own clothing. Economy is just as commendable in one situation as in another. It is equally laudable in the legislator and in the private citizen. It gives strength to government, and independence to individuals. So strongly am I impressed with the truth of these remarks, that if I have lost sight of the obligation to be economical while I have been your representative I am not conscious of it. Economy is precisely the same thing in private and public life. It does not consist exclusively in husbanding money, but in the profitable use of it. In a national point of view it is true economy to provide against war in time of peace—that is the season to fortify the passes into the country, to enlarge the navy, and lay up the means of defence. To avoid aggression and insult, we must be in a situation to meet and repel it—and we must look forward and count the chances and the vicissitudes of the world for the interruption of our tranquillity.

It is true economy for the government to take no more by taxes from the people than will answer those great purposes just enumerated, support the government, and pay the public debt; all beyond this should be left with the people, to be applied by a profitable economy to enlarging their flocks, improving their fields and their houses, thereby increasing their comforts and the comforts of posterity. I might appeal to the fidelity of legislators and to the affection of fathers, and ask, are these remarks just? It has been said by political writers, that luxury, corruption, and large standing armies, have led to the decadence of free government wherever they have prevailed; and no doubt they have; but there are other agents just as mischievous, just as fatal to free governments, to wit: patronage, and a profuse expenditure of public money. Let government be administered by whom it may, believe me, it will not do to have the private fortunes the entire destinies of too many individuals united to the destinies of the government by official and fiscal relationship—government is like every thing else that is the work of man, imperfect, and is prone to

occasional error. Our forefathers have left us a rule by which these aberrations, when they occur, can be corrected; they have told us that the blessings of free government can alone be preserved by a frequent recurrence to first principles; which I understand to mean, look to the Constitution, and abide by its letter; it is the grant of power, and do not transcend it.

What may be the political excitements elsewhere I will not pretend to say; but up to this moment the deliberations of Congress this session have been calm and dignified, and there seems to be a general disposition to bow to the clearly expressed will of the majority at the last election, and the new administration will go into operation with the prayers of good men of all parties for its management of the public affairs in such a way as to advance the prosperity, happiness, and glory of these confederated republics.

Fellow-citizens: I again tender you my services in the national legislature. I am grateful for the honors you have heretofore bestowed on me, and I have endeavored to deserve them by performing my duties to the best of my abilities.

The trust is important—in its discharge I may have committed errors; for to err is human; but, having done my best, I cheerfully submit my pretensions to the arbitrament of a generous, magnanimous, and enlightened people; and if elected, will, as heretofore, contribute my might to preserve the principles of our happy Constitution, and hand them to posterity as we inherit them from our fathers of revolutionary times. Accept, fellow-citizens, the homage of my most respectful consideration.

NATHANIEL H. CLAIBORNE.

*Washington City, Dec. 20, 1828.*













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